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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY NLK-77-782  
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*James*

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Channels of Influence to  
General de Gaulle

1. General de Gaulle has long deliberately fostered the belief that he is able to perform his duties shrouded in impenetrable reserve, relying but little on anyone for assistance or advice. This impression has been strengthened by de Gaulle's widely known theories of personal power and how it is exercised, which lead him to exclude many of his ministers from any direct role in deciding the broad lines of national policy. Perhaps in part because ministers are associated in de Gaulle's thinking with the interests their departments serve, he has over the years assembled a loyal and able personal staff, which has in some ways taken on executive functions. To counter the tendency toward isolation of the presidency which this has entailed, de Gaulle has devised other means of keeping himself informed and primed with fresh ideas.

Prime Minister and Cabinet

2. De Gaulle accords his prime ministers easy access to himself, and both Debre and his successor, Pompidou, evidently have been particularly close to the president's thinking. Although de Gaulle sacrificed Debre once the Algerian settlement was reached, Debre still sees de Gaulle occasionally. Like Debre, Premier Pompidou has had a long, and possibly even more intimate association with de Gaulle. He is reported to have helped de Gaulle write his war memoirs, and served as his Chef de Cabinet from June 1958 to January 1959. Although in 1960-61 he had no official position in the government, Pompidou reportedly had de Gaulle's complete confidence, and was chosen for some of the key "pre-negotiations" held with the Algerian rebels.

3. Pompidou apparently does not hesitate to stand up to de Gaulle when he has reservations about

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a particular policy. He reportedly protested strongly the President's earlier decision to execute General Jouhaud, the convicted OAS leader, when Jouhaud's fellow dissident, General Salan, received a sentence of life imprisonment.

4. Of the cabinet ministers in whom de Gaulle reposes particular confidence, those generally considered to have the best access to him are Minister of State for Cultural Affairs Andre Malraux, Minister of State for Scientific Research, Nuclear and Space Matters Gaston Palewski, and Minister of State for Administrative Reform Louis Joxe. Palewski, unlike the others, is personally dependent on de Gaulle for his bread and butter.

#### Personal Staff

5. Because of their regular access to de Gaulle and their knowledge of his personal predilections and operating procedures, the members of de Gaulle's personal cabinet have the best opportunity to influence him. The cabinet consists of two major groups. One of these has broad responsibilities in administration, military matters, and protocol. Members of this group, which controls visitors, and handles the paper flow, have developed intimate relationships with de Gaulle over years of service. It has three sections, the General Secretariat under Etienne Burin des Roziers, the Cabinet of the President of the Republic under Georges Galichon, and the Personal Military Staff of the President of the Republic, which Air Force General Gabriel Gauthier will head on 1 January 1963.

6. At a particularly difficult turn in Anglo-French relations over the EEC negotiations, de Gaulle appointed Burin des Roziers' predecessor, Geoffroy de Courcel, ambassador to Britain. Burin des Roziers, who became Secretary General on 15 February 1962, was close to de Gaulle during World War II and in the immediate post-war period. Less is known about his relationship to de Gaulle than about de Courcel's, but the two occupants of the top personal cabinet position have similar backgrounds and probably operate in a similar gashion.

7. In May 1961 [REDACTED] with good personal contacts in de Gaulle's cabinet made some

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interesting comments on the de Courcel-de Gaulle relationship. He thought that if anyone was in a position to influence de Gaulle it was de Courcel, but he could not imagine de Courcel going to the President and initiating suggestions. At the same time, he felt that de Gaulle would listen to de Courcel's advice, if he himself had solicited it.

8. While de Gaulle asks no help in preparing his public statements and seldom gives advance warning to his ministers, there is evidence that his closest advisers sometimes have prior knowledge of at least the general tenor of what he is going to pronounce. Four days before de Gaulle's 15 May 1962 press conference, Burin des Roziers told an American newsman the points de Gaulle intended to emphasize. Burin des Roziers almost certainly intended his comments to reach the US Government in order to soften the impact of the pro-Europe, anti-NATO statements de Gaulle wanted to make.

#### Foccart's Role

9. The other major group within the Elysee with the responsibility of directly advising the President is the General Secretariat to the President of the Republic for the Community and African and Malagasy Affairs, headed by Jacques Foccart. This was originally formed to handle the problems expected to fall on the French President who is concurrently President of the French Community. Even though the French Community is now largely defunct, the Foccart group plays a key role in monitoring African affairs for de Gaulle. Because of his lively interest in Africa, it probably exercises a greater influence on French policy there than either the Ministry of Cooperation with the African States or the responsible sections of the Foreign Ministry. Although his office is not in the Elysee Palace, Foccart spends every afternoon there. He reports directly to de Gaulle and, on policies in which de Gaulle has taken a personal interest, coordinates the work of the other ministries concerned.

10. While second-level members of the personal cabinet are available to offer advice, especially in technical fields, they are not necessarily in a position to influence policy. Many of these individuals have been with de Gaulle in one capacity or

another ever since the days of the Free French movement, and were subsequently in the Foreign Ministry or the administration of French territories overseas. As a group they are utterly loyal to de Gaulle, in basic agreement with his policies, and reticent about discussing their official functions. This circle includes such men as Guy Camus, the science adviser on the staff of the Secretary General, Pierre LeFranc, who concentrates on press and public affairs presentations, and Colonel Gaston de Bonnel (Army), the senior aide de camp and reportedly the key figure in controlling access to de Gaulle.

### The Military

11. De Gaulle has never concealed his low opinion of the political sagacity of military officers. Changes he has brought about in the organization of the French defense establishment have tended to increase civilian authority. Last summer de Gaulle brought top level military planning more directly under his personal control. The position of Chief of Staff for National Defense, which has been held by such officers as General Paul Ely and Jean Olie, was downgraded, and some of its duties have been taken over by the administrative staff of the National Defense Committee over which de Gaulle presides. This staff is now headed by Air Force General Michel Fourquet.

12. While de Gaulle respects technical competence, he has had little patience with those military advisers who have differed with him on matters of grand strategy ranging from Algeria to the development of a national nuclear striking force. Many high officers who have been outspoken in opposition have been shifted to posts of little importance or have been made to feel obliged to accept early retirement. The winnowing process has brought to the top of the military structure a group of officers who adhere closely to the de Gaulle strategy.

### Other Contacts

13. De Gaulle's solitary aloofness is more apparent than real, and he maintains many contacts outside his personal staff and the government. He frequently talks with party leaders, including those of the opposition, and discusses major policies in a frank

and open way. In the few instances which have been reported verbatim, however, there seems to be a note of gamesmanship in de Gaulle's repartee. More than once de Gaulle's staff has had to discount in public what de Gaulle has evidently said in private.

14. De Gaulle receives many foreign visitors--usually formally as in the case of the heads of state of the former French African states. Invariably, these leaders come away from the meeting feeling that they have brought de Gaulle to agree with them. Of the other foreign leaders, Chancellor Adenauer is sometimes credited with the most influence, although the record of their close personal association seems to show that de Gaulle's is the more formidable personality.

15. De Gaulle makes an almost daily practice of receiving visitors representative of a wide range of social and economic interests. While many of these visitors may leave with an inflated opinion of the impression they have made on him, ideas that have been presented to him in these interviews are frequently embodied in his public statements and influence his policy decisions.

#### Non-Official Organizations

16. Of particular interest among non-official organizations with possible influence on de Gaulle is the French Center for the Study of International Politics. This is an informal organization headed by Jacques Vernant, and includes among its members retired Air Force General Pierre Gallois, noted French columnist Raymond Aron, and General Andre Beaufre. Another important member is Francois de Rose, civilian deputy to the Chief of State of National Defense, a key official with broad responsibilities in the fields of military and nuclear policy. Primarily concerned with international strategic problems, this group has held discussions with similar British and German groups. The writings of some of the members of the Center bring public consideration of political/military problems more closely into line with de Gaulle's views.